



English Policy

Rationale

The National Curriculum (2014) clearly states that teaching the English language is an essential, if not the most essential, role of a primary school.

At Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary School we recognise that without effective communication, little achievement can be made. We know that we have a duty to ensure that English teaching is a priority and we recognise that this is cross-curricular and a constant through-out school life and beyond. It is part of the 'essential knowledge' that is needed in society:

'Teachers should develop pupil's spoken language, reading, writing and vocabulary as integral aspects of the teaching of every subject. English is both a subject in its own right and the medium for teaching; for pupils, understanding the language provides access to the whole curriculum. Fluency in the English language is an essential foundation for success in all subjects.' (p10 National Curriculum)

We are an inclusive school and we set high expectations and recognise the importance of accurate and regular assessment in order to support individuals at every part of their learning journey, irrespective of individual circumstances. We use a combination of one to one support, small group work and intervention groups to support this. We plan teaching and learning opportunities to help those with disabilities outlined in the SEND code of practice. We agree with the statement of the National Curriculum, that 'pupils...who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised' (p13)

Statement of Intent

At Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary School, we aim for all pupils to become fluent, creative and technically-skilled writers who have the knowledge and understanding required to adapt their writing to suit a range of different purposes and audiences. We want our learners to appreciate the importance of writing as an essential form of communication which builds on spoken language and on what has been read.

Through our logically sequenced and progressive English curriculum, we aim to develop a child who is highly literate with the oracy skills to communicate with confidence. The overarching aim for English in the National Curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

The National Curriculum has provided us with a starting point for our Writing Curriculum. We have incorporated the National Curriculum aims of:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

The writing journey begins in EYFS where mark-making and letter formation are taught. High-quality texts - which reflect our learner's interests - spark a passion for writing and children begin to develop awareness of purpose and audience.

Children are encouraged to apply vocabulary, which has been explored in Reading lessons and other areas of the curriculum, within their writing.

We believe that writing outcomes are strengthened by instilling a love for reading in our pupils. Our children experience engaging encounters with carefully selected texts. Speaking, listening, vocabulary and reading skills are progressively developed. This allows our learners to access the skills needed to write effectively and creatively within a meaningful context.

An important component of effective composition involves organising ideas coherently for the reader. We therefore aim to support all our pupils to have a clear awareness of purpose and audience when writing and to be technically

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accurate writers with a secure knowledge of grammar and punctuation. In order for our children to write fluently, they are taught to spell with accuracy through our effective Phonics and Spelling programmes. All learners are also taught a legible handwriting style.

We also recognise the value of making links to other areas of the curriculum, allowing pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through their English lessons.

At Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary School, we are committed to 'striving for excellence' and wish to instil this aspirational outlook within our children. We want pupils to see themselves as writers and support them to see writing as a journey which requires them to plan, edit and revise their writing.

Implementation

Through our text-led English curriculum, we ignite a love for reading in our learners, enhancing the quality of their writing outcomes. Our English curriculum covers the skills outlined in the National Curriculum through broad, challenging and inspiring themes. Through the use of carefully chosen texts, we deliver content within a meaningful context and wherever possible purposeful cross-curricular links are exploited.

Children use their knowledge, skills and understanding in speaking and writing across a range of different situations to ensure breadth, balance, continuity and progression. This results in building new skills and knowledge based upon what has been taught before.

At Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary School, we follow the Talk for Writing teaching sequence in EYFS, KS1 and Lower KS2, which is a structured, scaffolded teaching method, providing model texts for the children to learn and practise the style of various genre. In upper KS2, we move to The Literary Curriculum, allowing for a greater degree of creativity for our older children, providing the opportunity for children to use and practise the skills and knowledge taught in KS1 and Lower KS2 as they progress through our school.

The English Unit Process

Identify gaps in learning – The teacher will analyse previously written compositions to identify gaps in learning. Planning will then focus on these gaps, allowing the children to progress with their writing development.

Creating Interest - The teacher will use a 'hook' to stimulate pupil interest and facilitate speaking and listening opportunities which allow the children to engage with the theme of learning.

Reading - Responding and Analysing – Quality discussions will allow children to develop a secure understanding of a text. This may take place during Reading lessons. Children will be given the opportunity to unpick the text structure and identify key features of the genre to inform their writing.

Gathering Content – Children will explore ideas, information, characters etc. in order to generate content to be used within their extended writing outcomes. Children are given the opportunity to practise grammar skills, in preparation for application within extended pieces of writing. During these initial phases of the process, the children will then produce shorter pieces of writing, allowing them to revisit and practise writing skills.

Planning and Writing – The purpose and audience for writing is identified and discussed, allowing children to demonstrate their flair and effective writing composition. Children will discuss and record ideas. A range of modelled, shared, guided and independent writing takes place in English lessons across all year groups. Pupils are given the opportunity to utilise genre specific features and apply their grammar skills.

Evaluating and Editing – Children will be supported to evaluate their writing with adults and peers and given the opportunity to edit and improve their writing in relation to audience and purpose.

Reading Aloud to Others – Using appropriate tone, intonation and volume, children will present their writing to others.

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Independent Writing for Assessment

Following completion of an English unit, children are given the opportunity to write an independent version of the text type. Prior to this, they are given the time to think, plan and discuss their ideas and have access to prompts created throughout the unit. Crucially, however, teachers do not model writing to support the completion of this second outcome. This allows the children to apply the skills learnt within the unit and demonstrate their ability to use the features of the text type. This writing outcome is very useful to inform assessment and next steps in teaching and learning. Where appropriate, other opportunities for independent writing are planned during the early stages of an English unit, allowing the children to apply the skills they have previously learnt.

Grammar and Punctuation

As part of our writing process, age-appropriate grammar and/or punctuation skills, based on the genre or text type from this unit, are taught within the lesson, and children are given the opportunity to practise these skills. Children are then supported in how to apply genre specific features and grammatical content within a meaningful context through high quality modelled writing. The children are then expected to apply the skill appropriately within their own writing.

Spelling

In order to enable our children to write their ideas down fluently, they are taught to understand the relationship between letters and sounds through high quality systematic, synthetic Phonics teaching. At Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary School, the Read, Write, Inc. scheme is followed from EYFS through to Year 2. From Year 2 onwards, children learn to understand the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Spellings are taught progressively within and across year groups, allowing children to build upon their previous learning. Discrete spelling lessons are taught in a 'little-but-often' structure so that children are able to revisit and review, learn new strategies and apply.

Handwriting

A fluent and legible handwriting style empowers children to write with confidence and creativity. At Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary School, we model handwriting, providing opportunities for the children to practise, which covers the requirements set out in the National Curriculum. From EYFS onwards, children are taught to sit correctly at a table and hold their pencil comfortably and correctly. For our younger pupils, activities to develop both gross and fine motor skills are implemented. Children are taught the correct letter formation in EYFS, without any lead-in or lead-out strokes. When appropriate, the children are taught to form their letters with lead-outs. The children will progress to a joined handwriting style when they are ready for the transition. In all year groups, discrete handwriting lessons are taught. At our school, we take great pride in the presentation of all our work. Children are expected to use their handwriting skills across all areas of the curriculum and the appropriate handwriting style is modelled by teaching staff. Children experiencing handwriting difficulties are provided with additional resources (e.g. triangular pencils, grip aids etc) to aid this process. If necessary, children who require additional support will undertake focus sessions for letter formation, hand and finger strength.

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Impact

At Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary School, our pupils are enthusiastic speakers, readers and writers who enjoy showcasing their developing literacy knowledge and skills. Our learners are able to transfer their skills learnt within English lessons to access the wider curriculum. They are also able to use the knowledge and skills learnt to meet the challenges of the next part of their educational journey and are able to participate fully as a member of society. The impact of our English curriculum is measured through monitoring both in school and in our school clusters, alongside our assessment procedures. This includes:

- Lesson observations
- Book monitoring
- Learning walks
- Discussions with class teachers
- Discussions with pupils
- Formative and summative assessment data, including regular analysis and evaluation by class teachers and subject leaders

Monitoring and assessment data is used to measure whether:

- Learners enjoy and are inspired by the writing curriculum in our school.
- There is a clear progression of learners' work and teachers' expectations in our school.
- Learners' work shows that a text led approach, which incorporates the teaching of a range of speaking, listening, vocabulary and reading skills, is used as part of the writing process.
- Learners' work shows that purposeful links are made to the wider curriculum to provide meaningful writing opportunities.
- Pupils are able to apply genre specific features and appropriate grammatical skills within their writing.
- Learners are able to use their phonic and spelling knowledge to spell with accuracy and speed.
- Learners are able to write fluently using a legible and, in time, speedy handwriting style.
- Learners are able to evaluate and improve their writing and make insightful comments on the writing of authors and peers.
- Feedback from teachers has an impact on our pupils, often with next step questions to push learning on.

All learners are making progress with their writing, including SEND learners. Monitoring is also used to identify gaps in the curriculum that may need to be addressed across the school, or within individual year groups. Monitoring is an ongoing cycle, which is used productively to provide the best possible English curriculum for our learners.

Recording of Work

During the English unit process, children are given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. Oracy skills are promoted through speaking and listening and drama opportunities. Adult scribing is utilised to record vocabulary gathered and outcomes of pupil discussions which the children can refer back to, enhancing writing outcomes. Shorter writing opportunities allow writing skills to be practised and revisited. Through extended pieces of writing, children are able to apply their learning and skills and show their understanding of the text type.

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Assessment, Reporting and Tracking Process

Formative assessment is undertaken within lessons using evidence from the teacher assessment of class work, oral responses and independent writing. Teachers use the Depth of Learning Assessment Programme regularly to make formative assessments against key statements. This provides opportunities to identify gaps in pupils learning and informs future lesson planning.

Teachers assess independent writing pieces at the end of (or occasionally within) each unit of writing. Our writing assessment system supports pupils in applying the skills which have been taught within the unit within a written piece. Teachers will then use this assessment to inform next steps in their planning by identify the strengths and emerging needs of our writers.

Data is analysed termly to ensure that those off track or underperforming are identified early and actions to support them put into place. Gaps in writing skills are identified and lessons are focused on closing those gaps and working towards or beyond year group expectations. Staff make summative judgments on a half-termly basis. This data is analysed and reported on by the subject leader, who utilises the information to make strategic choices about development with the subject. Performance is reported to parents on an annual basis as part of their school report. Work is showcased on displays and in books via parents' evenings.

Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

We have ensured that our English curriculum meets the needs of all learners so that they achieve as highly as possible, relative to their individual starting points. At the earliest opportunity, difficulties are identified and support is provided as soon as practical. Tasks are carefully differentiated and Support Plans are used to inform planning. Where appropriate, individual or small group programmes of work will be implemented, using materials and strategies to aid the pupils' development. In line with our vision to create a child who 'Strives for Excellence', we use our best endeavours to achieve maximum inclusion and success for all our children, including SEND, vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

The Learning Environment

Working walls are used to show the progression through the English unit. Ideas, vocabulary, modelled and shared writing is displayed. The content of the English working wall changes regularly to support teaching and learning as it develops in the classroom thus allowing children to access prior learning, make links to what they already know and apply this to future learning. The working wall enables children to refer to concepts and resources, supporting them to become more secure independent learners. Children's writing achievements are also celebrated and displayed within the classroom and school environment.

Involving Parents and Carers

At Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary School, we believe that parents/carers have a vital role to play in supporting children with their writing skill development. We encourage parents/carers to be involved in the writing curriculum by:

- Holding induction meetings for new parents to promote the importance of early writing skills
- Providing parents/carers with guides outlining what the expectations for handwriting are in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 and how they can support their child at home
- Inviting parents/carers to attend parents' evenings twice a year to discuss their child's progress and development.
- Ensuring that class teachers regularly communicate with parents/carers with regards to progress in English and reading at home.
- Using our English page on the school website to provide information and useful resources for parents/carers.

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Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In the Foundation Stage, Literacy forms the basis of one of seven areas of learning. Our text led Early Years curriculum, which reflects children's interests, sparks a love for both reading and writing in our learners. Within our language-rich environment, we develop children's ability to speak with confidence, clarity and fluency in a variety of situations for different audiences, alongside developing attentive listening and understanding skills. Practitioners model quality conversation and writing, extending the children's vocabulary and promoting grammatical accuracy. Various resources are used to develop gross and fine motor control which lays strong foundations for writing. Through the use of carefully selected texts, we make purposeful and engaging cross-curricular, topic links which provide children with a wide variety of writing opportunities. Children access writing during child initiated play within the provision areas, building their confidence and desire to write. Children are given opportunities to write in a range of genres and text types for a variety of real purposes and audiences. Within our creative, language-rich Early Years environment, children feel motivated and inspired to write, which continues as they progress on their writing journey through school.

Role of the Subject Leader

The English leader is responsible for:

- Regularly reviewing texts used as part of our text led approach to ensure that the latest, quality literature is incorporated into the curriculum
- Ensuring continuity and progression in knowledge and skills across year groups from EYFS to Year 6
- Acting as a model of good practice and providing targeted support and guidance to staff
- Monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in writing regularly and improving the standards of writing throughout school
- Analysing assessment data in order to plan whole school improvement in writing
- Working with the Head Teacher to develop the ongoing training and staff development activities to ensure staff have the skills and confidence to deliver high quality teaching
- Keeping up to date on national initiatives links to English and undertaking research into best practice
- Keeping the school's policy for writing under regular review

Training, Support for Staff and Connected Experts

Regular CPD is provided in line with the school's overall curriculum development cycle. Where further support is required, the subject leader provides 1:1 support. Collaborative work has also been undertaken with an English Consultant from Talk for Writing, who has supported staff in the development of effective teaching and learning.

Disability Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been written with reference to and in consideration of the school's Disability Equality Scheme. Assessment will include consideration of issues identified by the involvement of disabled children, staff and parents and any information the school holds on disabled children, staff and parents.

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be made to Mrs. S.A Kirby (Subject Leader), or Mrs. C. Sharp (Head Teacher)

Policy Written by: Mrs S. A. Kirby

Reviewed: March 2023

Next review date: September 2024